

**2008 ADE/CEF Promising Practices Awards
Part I: Cover Sheet**

Practice Name "Integrity Card"

Name of Principal Randy Gilson

Official School Name Bales Elementary School

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I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate. If my program is recognized as a Promising Practice the contents of this application may be made available to the public.

R. Melton Date 11-29-07
(Principal's signature)

Name of Superintendent Mike Melton, Jane Hunt, asst sup.

District Name Buckeye Elem. School District Tel. () 623-386-4487

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I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

Jane Hunt Date 11/29/07
(Superintendent's signature)

1. Every Bales eighth grader carries a card the size of a driver's license with the word "integrity" and the student's name. Each student made his own at the beginning of the year, and each card begins completely intact. These are called "Integrity Cards". We laminate them, hang them on lanyards around our necks or place them in our wallets, and they become a part of us. And then the real test begins. The object for the students is to keep their integrity intact, and that means keeping the card intact.

Then the students made a list of "offenses against integrity". Lying, cheating, breaking rules, and manipulating people are some of the offenses. If a student commits an offense, he takes out his card, and a teacher or staff member uses a hole-punch to take a little piece of integrity from the card. Kids who don't show integrity accumulate hole punches in their card; and the card is soon just a shred of paper—very little *integrity* left. The card represents integrity in a powerful and visual way I never could have imagined.

If a student loses or misplaces her card, for fifty cents she can purchase the paperwork to get a new one. The form asks how she lost her original and how many holes it had. Since it is an application for integrity, the kids are honest about the number of original holes. The administration supports the cards by using them when discussing an office referral with the students. The cards are often punched or sometimes suspended and the parents notified.

The students wear their Integrity Cards with pride. We began giving out stickers for students who showed a high degree of integrity. These stickers were a visual demonstration of good moral character. And for those students whose cards have a few holes, they learn quickly that there are second chances; but once a little bit of integrity is lost, it is gone forever. And nothing could be closer to real life. Sometimes that's the very best lesson we can teach.

2. Every day I have the kids set their Integrity Card on their desk when they enter class. Immediately and without my asking, the gum is spit out, and anything that might earn a hole-punch just disappears. I never have to say a thing (though I do wear a small hole-punch around my neck). Kids work harder in class and I find these days I give more stickers than holes.

Several weeks ago, I thought I had caught a girl cheating on a test. I kept her after class and confronted her. She got tears in her eyes, produced her Integrity Card and promised that she had not been cheating. I gave her the benefit of the doubt and ever since that day, I have seen a change in attitude and behavior that I had not expected or even hoped for.

3. (Random House) *Integrity: adherence to ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty*. Integrity defined by students sounds a bit different. "To trust and have your word mean something;" "To be respectful and show manners;" and "trustworthy, responsible, able to be relied on; Six Pillars/Traits of Character". These are the Bales eighth grade students' definitions of integrity.

In October we discussed the Integrity Card at parent/teacher conferences. The kids explained what integrity means and told the parent how the card works. The cards were overwhelmingly well-received. Parent after parent looked at the card, saw the demonstration card filled with punches and said, "What a good idea. Mind if I use this at home?" And the answer is: Of course we don't mind. Please use it at home. And at the mall and football practice! If kids carried these everywhere, how would that affect the choices they make?

With staff and parent input, not to mention student suggestions; the program may look different in five years. But that's what character programs are all about—building the character within, so that the symbols become just that. The card will someday be just a reminder of a trait that our students already knowingly possess. Intrinsic integrity.